

REMARKS

Claims 2-10, 12-19, and 21-30 are pending. Claims 2, 3, 5, 8-10, 12, 13, 15-19, 21, 23, 25, 28, and 29 have been amended. Claims 1, 11, and 20 have been cancelled. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

In the May 18, 2007 Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings. In the August 20, 2007 (received in the USPTO on August 22) Rule 116 Amendment, the Applicant enclosed replacement FIGS. 1-5, FIGS. 6a-6c, FIGS. 7a, 7b and FIG. 8. The objection to the drawings is understood by the Applicant as having been overcome by the prior submission of the replacement drawings, since the objection was not mentioned in the August 29, 2007 Advisory Action.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5, 10-12, 18-22, 25, 28, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Lamb, U.S. Patent No. 5,382,240 (hereinafter the Lamb reference). The Examiner rejected claims 6, 15, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being obvious over Lam in view of Tal (US2003/0153874). The Examiner rejected claims 7, 16, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being obvious over Lamb in view of Maclean Crawford et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,659,984 (hereinafter the Maclean Crawford reference). The Examiner rejected claims 9, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being obvious over Lamb in view of Dillon et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,833,670 (hereinafter the Dillon reference).

In response to the Final Office Action, the Applicant filed an amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 on August 20, 2007. In the amendment, the Applicant amended independent claims 1, 11, and 20 based on the Examiner's suggestion that the addition of a specific claim limitation drawn to the sheath and sleeve elements being "separate and sliding over each other as seen in Figure 4" would distinguish over the cited references.

The Examiner issued an Advisory action dated August 29, 2007 indicating that the Applicant's amendment would not be entered because the amendment raises new issues that would require further consideration. Accordingly, in order to place the application in condition for allowance, Applicant has cancelled independent claims 1, 11, and 20 in response to the Examiner's rejections.

Furthermore, in the Final Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 3, 4, 13, 14, 23, and 24 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but indicated that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. By this amendment, Applicant has rewritten in independent form, and slightly amended for sake of clarity, claims 3, 13, and 23 in accordance with the Examiner's remarks. Claim 4 continues to depend from amended independent claim 3. Claim 14 continues to depend from amended independent claim 13. Claim 24 continues to depend from amended independent claim 23.

Applicant has amended claims 2, 5, and 8-10 to depend from re-written independent claim 3, claims 12, and 15-19 to depend from re-written independent claim 13, and claims 21, 25, 28, and 29 to depend from re-written independent claim 23. The Applicant believes that rewritten independent claims 3, 13, and 23, and dependent claims 2, 4-10, 12, 14-19, 21, and 24-30 are in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes that the foregoing amendment and remarks place the application in condition for allowance, and a favorable action is respectfully requested. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in

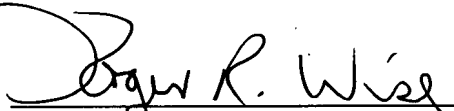
condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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